THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Replacement of old coaches on age-cum-condition basis is a continuous process and new coaches are added every year. Funds amounting to Rs. 681.91 crores have been provided during the current financial year, i.e. 2000-01, for manufacturing of new coaches.

(d) Indian Railways follow uniform norms to upgrade the coaches in different Zonal Railways covering various regions. Several measures for modernisation of coaches including fitment of air brakes, provision of modern vestibules of UIC type, improved flooring, 110V electrical system in place of 24 Volts system, roof mounted AC package units etc. are being taken in a phased manner within the available resources.

Rail Bridge over Ganga

*198. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to construct Rail bridge over river Ganga near Patna;

(b) if so, what has been the follow-up action in this direction; and

(c) by when Government propose to get the bridge finally constructed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) to (c) Detailed investigation and final location survey for construction of a railway bridge across river Ganga between Patna and Sonepur have been taken up by M/s. RITES. Model studies are being done by Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee and after their completion, the alignment and configuration of the bridge will get finalised. Once the design and alignment of the bridge is finalised, the cost estimates shall be firmed up and the proposal will be processed for requisite clearances. A provision of Rs. 5 crores has been kept for this work in the Budget 2000-2001. The work would be taken up after these clearances have been received.